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# Me and Lawson

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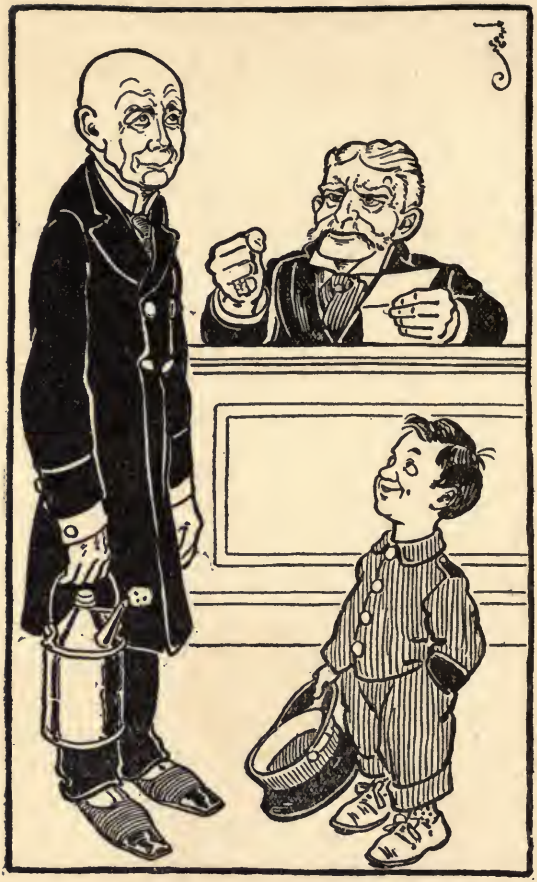
Merry Christmas
to Papa
from Helen.
Xmas. 1905

# ME AND LAWSON



Scrambled Oil

" Rogers gave a swift look at Rockyfeller."—Page 31

*Frontispiece*

# ME AND LAWSON

"HUMPTY" HOTFOOT'S LITTLE RUN IN WITH FRENZIED COPPER, AMALGAMATED GAS AND SCRAMBLED OIL

By RICHARD WEBB

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
W. W. DENSLOW

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ME AND LAWSON

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# HUMPTY AND THE BOSS

## HUMPTY AND THE BOSS

"HEAD HISSERS IN THE SNAKE HOUSE"

HEE! but them Wall Street Separators has got a nerve to call Mister Lawson a Spider-web Speiler. He ain't a chink laundry ticket in a pink shirt factory 'side of them. They don't do a thing to you but Annex all you got and then wire the News to mother-in-law.

How do I know?

Didn't I onct work in a Stomach-cure Foundry that old Rockyfeller bought out, and ain't I bin Lawson's Head Hurry-boy since I let the Western

Union print me name on their door knob?

It puts me to the Laughing Gas when I hear them Willie-Wises chin about the high-man money game. They ain't Next no more than a bowlegged billy goat at a head-push horse show.

There's only one 18-karat Gold Fish in the Coin Aquarium just now, and that's me close friend, Thomas Solar-Plexus Lawson.

The first time I seen him was when I delivered a Gas-stove message from Colonel Bill Greene about his coming to Boston to shoot the shingles off the Boss's Brain Barn. I whizzed up to his door in me Two-calf Panthard Bubble and sent in me card by meself. The Soda-Water Sammy who shuffles the gate money and tells you the Boss is out when he's in, and sorry for it, was

rattled about something and sent me straight to the Captain's Office.

I had seen a bunch of first-money Gazeepers like John Soakem Sullivan, Cassie Borrow Chadwick, Divorce-Bill Cody, and was keen to put me Lamps on Lawson.

I walked up to him like a cop on pay day and pushed the telegram in his right mit. He gave me a far-Rockaway look with a Hetty Green smile as he uncanned the message. I held me cap in me hand while he read it, and in a minute he went up in the air to beat a Subway dago on top of a blast. He made motions that put Jitsoo to the Milk Toast, and his Face Music was as rough house as a police captain talking fire works to his men.

I was rubbering for a cyclone cellar when he began to write his come-back;

but it must have been raining in Mexico, as the bull fight didn't come off.

In about three squirts of a seltzer bottle he passed me his reply and I skated out of the place like a fly what had got too busy with a bald head.

On me run back to the office I read the paper, and it was this way:

DEAR BILL—Welcome to Dreamhurst. Come early and avoid the rush. You don't say whether your weapon is a Dope gun, or one for exterminating Insects. In either case may I suggest that you try it on Yourself, as my Dog is now quite well, thank you.

Yours, until the next time,

LAWSON.

On the level now, do you think them Scrambled-oil Wine Openers could grease up a Wire like that?

It wasn't till after I had carried a lot

of Cholera-mixture Messages for him that he gave me the Happy High Sign and handed me a Heart-to-heart.

One morning when the weather was weinerwurst than Sasaprilla at a Hibernian Picnic, I goes to him with a wire from his right bower, Jack Croach, asking about sending any more fake telegrams from New York in the name of prominent people, and he turns to me with this:

"Well, young man, how is your friend, Mister Rockyfeller, this morning? What do you think of Bible-class Preferred? How would you like to be the Oil Man?"

I know'd he was guying me, and quick as a flashlight of Russell Sage taking money, I sed,

"Me for you, Mister Lawson. You're the real Boston Bunker-hill Cream

Puff. You're making them Highbinders look like an Uncle Sam toy terrier with a Philippine tin can tied to his Tab."

"Then you think they're on the run, do you?"

"Shure, Mike," sez I, "havn't they hired a Talk-tosser with a Shamrock name to throw Word Bombs at you? Didn't Mister Rogers go to Europe to let his coppers cool off, and didn't Rockyfeller's Kid go acrost too, after handing his bunch of White Mice Doogooders a flock of Yarn Mottoes to eat while he was gone?"

"Do you see many people reading Nobody's Magazine?" sez he.

"You bet, and hear 'em talking about it, too. Some sez you're the guy what owns it, others sez it's Charley Moss, the banker, and some sez they

don't give a dam. One Gazabo sed you dropped a Coffin-full of Ashes in your High Ball by leaving the editors mix some of your Speil with the ads in the back of the magazine, and by printing some Paid Puffs about yourself, writ by need-the-money newspaper men."

Then I asked him if he was for the Golden Rule, and he sed he was a plain man, the Friend of the People, and a Copper One was good enough for him, specially when he made it Hisself.

I was renting meself to the Western Onion by the week, and about the fifth birthday of me job Lawson sez to me,

"Humpty, how would you like to be a High Funny-businesser with me and have Wall Street call you one of the Head Hissers in the Snake House?"

I cleared a couple of Goodluck Horse-shoes out of me throat, and sed,

"You're on, Mister Lawson; I'm stuck on you. You're the only Haughty Porch-climber what wipes his feet on the Family Mat before making the Touch, and then puts his own freight-car seal on the window blind to keep out Common Grafters."

He laughed as loud as a row of Canned Fruit exploding in a Bum Grocery and hired me before I could tell him about me orphaned mother, and me being the only one she had to lean on when her thirst was working.

I give the Western Onion notice, and wham! splash! their stock bumped for ten points when the News showed up on the ticker.

# SCRAMBLED OIL

## SCRAMBLED OIL

"LIKE A MARBLE MONUMENT AND A SEA SERPENT GOING TO DROWN THEIR MOTHER-IN-LAWS"

HE first day I wore the Lawson collar I put a patent leather shine on the Tonneau of me Pants setting outside of his private Scheming Vault, looking wise.

I must have made a hit with him from the jump, because he kept me sticking-plaster close all the time. I did me best to catch his pitching and railroad the guys he didn't want to mouth-organ with.

There were a couple of Roof-garden Robbies in his Office Chorus what I called the White-spat Sisters, because they dressed in tandem and rushed the same Acterine. The word Leaksky was printed all over their Face Plates and I put 'em on the Slippery Elm Card from the start.

It wasn't long before I caught them pulling the bung out of the Boss's Secret-keg, and it was Me to the Pinkerton solo.

I swam into the Boss, just as he was having a careless picture of Himself took for the magazine, and after breathing heavy through both barrels of me smeller, like a fly cop, I sed, fussing me face in the place where the Black Moustache ought to be:

"Mister Lawson, you need a Word-Plumber. There's a Leak in your catch

basin. Give me the go-ahead bell and I'll put you wise."

Then I told him the whole story.

He give his cigar a couple of mad-dog bites and then he takes me by the shoulders and sez, swift but kind as a missionary,

"Humpty, you're a good boy. By gad, you're worth any two men I know. You can play Croquet in my Cemetery Lot any time you want to."

Then he hands me a Ten Spot, right off the roll in his overalls, and tells me to come back in three hours.

I went out on the street looking for a Bank to do me Private Business with, and swelled up so Mud-rich that I couldn't feel the sidewalk, nor tell the Apple Woman from Little Eva.

I was Johnny-on-the-spot when the three hours had went down into the cel-

lar of the clock to take a Rip Van Winkle, but the Boss was at the home plate with the bat in his mits when I sailed in.

He looked Absent Bug for a minute, like a travelling man wondering if he can trust the chambermaid with the watch he left under his pillow, and sed,

"Humpty, they say it's wrong to send a boy on a man's errand, but I don't know a man I can trust, so here goes. I want you to go over to New York to-morrow night and take a letter to Mister Rogers. The job must be done Secretly. If any one should get wise to your trip, or if you fall down on any part of me instructions, it will hurt me more than I can make you understand. You must deliver the letter to the Main Squeeze himself, and talk to no one but him. Do you think you can do it?"

"Sure as Roosevelt," sez I, "fire away."

"It will be necessary," sez he, "for you to be next to the contents of the letter, so listen Hard;

"I think it would be worth a lot of money to Mister Rogers to have me Stop doing something that I'm doing, and I am sure we can Both make more money by playing the Game together. I will write the letter so to make him Wise to this fact and all you have to do is bring back his answer. It will be Yes or No, and if it's Yes he will tell you a day, hour and place where we can meet. If he should Welch on Me and print the letter you must be ready to tell the Boston newspaper reporters that a man what I will tell you how to describe come to your house at ten o'clock at night, give you the letter and instruc-

tions, and told you I would phone you at the Imperial hotel in New York at nine in the morning, which of course I won't do."

I inhaled all that the Boss handed me and blew out of me Cigarette Chimney what was Chop Suey to me Reason Works.

The next night it was Humpty to the Pullman.

I had a catechism of a time seeing Mister Rogers, but about three in the afternoon I was squirted into his office by a Morgue-faced Mut what must have had Paris-green Prunes for lunch.

Bleeding Biscuits! but Rogers has got a great Face on him. It makes me swallow hard when I think of it in the dark. I onct saw a oil picture of a white battleship shooting at a black

torpedo boat in a night storm. That's Him, all right.

He took me letter and told me to sit down.

He looked at the bottom of it, then at me. He read about half of it and slipped a Haughty Grin like a business man telling his wife she don't understand Politics. Then he et up the rest of it; and, Great Bumps! I could just see the sailors inside of him bringing up shot for the guns.

I was getting set to soak him in the watch chain with me head if he come for me when the door opened and in comes the Original Human Church.

His Steeples was as bald as a Fly's Heaven. If I was a mosquito I'd be ashamed to take the money. Rogers give a swift, private-code look into the Cathedral Windows of the Psalm-faced Guy, and sed,

"Mister Rockyfeller, read that Curish Dastard's latest insult."

His Steeples took me letter cool as a prayer book and read it through twict without a Bark. Next he takes off his glasses, as slow as if it was Sunday Afternoon and forty miles from church. Then he looks up, slowly opens his Talk Factory, and sez,

"Mister Rogers, won't you kindly step into the nex' room?"

They went out, looking like a Marble Monument and a Sea Serpent going to drown their Mother-in-laws, and closed the door behind them, but the wall was only dinky glass and I could hear them fine as a phonograph.

Rogers touched off his cannon first, and sez,

"I have kept Mum as long as I am going to. That Brass-beaked vulture

has reviled me till Every String in me Harp Hisses with Hellish Pains. The time has came to go after him with all our guns. The public are amazed at our Tabbycat Silence and think us prison-guilty of the charge. As evidence, consider those doings in Kansas and the bunch of search-me investigations recently ordered.

"That stuff of Donohue's won't melt the people's ear-wax. Nothing short of a Real Thing Reply, hot from my own Personal Gas Range, will satisfy them, and stem the dirty tide which this Boston Boaster has started humping. I'll admit that Ice House Silence is dignified, but when it is had at the price of public confidence it is too much of a Luxury for me palate. You must release me from my promise not to talk."

He spieled like a actor and I marked

down in me nut every fat word he sed, so I could hand it to the Boss right.

Then solemn-faced Grandpa whistled for the brakes and cut in with,

"Mister Rogers, you must forbear. No good can possibly come from recognizing this man in any way. We are Glass-arm Powerless to cut any ice with words. You cannot deny his chatters in a hunk because they are based on Half-mast Truths. If you admit he has rung up the Right Change on any part of them so to deny the balance you'll have to give away conditions which the public ain't wise enough to see in the Right Light—the light which comes only from burning Our Oil.

"Remember the masses behind the votes can't tumble to Higher Finance or the workings of the great organizations which are necessary to provide

Safe Investments for the hundreds of millions paid in Scrambled Oil Dividends every three moons.

"It isn't Safe on First to tell the people what, why, when and Who we are doing. It would not interest them, and then agin it is none of Their business. No, Mister Rogers, you cannot punch back at this Bully without doing ourselves the most harm. And what Fusses us injures our unlearned children, the Public."

For a little it was as quiet as a cold poker game when the Sucker with the Fixed Hand starts to bet heavy. Then Mister Rogers cleared his pipes with a steam hiss, and sed:

"What would you say to me meeting him in a Rubber Shoe Place, jollying him in a paternal manner on the fight he has put up, pretend to take him in

with us, and then fix him like a Safety Match, so he can't strike fire except on Our Box? His letter shows he is ready for the Glad Hand, and his chest is so swelled that if I stand close he won't see me set His Watch back an hour behind Standard Time.

"The man is at least embarrassing all of the Big Rich Institutions in the country by pumping Harmful Thinks in the minds of the masses, and," sez he, sharp as a pitcher catching a batter between bases, "he ought to be Licked, and I'd like to be the guy what does it—for the Public Good, of course."

Quicker than a Jersey Busy-bug shooting his stinger, the church bells begun to toll in the Other Guy's throat, and he sed:

"No, Henry, you're wrong again. We mustn't seem to be wise to his ever

having lived or snarled. The Silence-what-won't-come-off is our only Mud-guard. Send the boy back with a Proper Impression; if you ain't got no objection I'll talk to him meself."

Then the both of them comes back with faces like a Blank Draw in a Grab Bag, and Mister Rockyfeller sez to me,

"My dear young man, who gave you this letter and told you to give it to me friend here?"

With that he throws me a Mother-I-have - won - the - speiling - prize - at - school look, and clears his pipes like a Factory Whistle where the strikers had lost out.

I was as sore as an Undertaker at a Wedding, and sed:

"The man what give me that Hot Talk Package was me best friend and side partner, Mr. Thomas Whollop'em

Lawson, a thoroughbred Boston Bull-terrier with a flock of Jim Jefferies Fists for Teeth."

I must have crossed over the Old One's guard and landed, because he looked like a Cook's tourist what had lost the Bunch. But he changed his mind with a Quick Monkey Wrench and sed, soft as molasses,

"Young feller, we Don't Know any such man."

"You don't," sez I, "well, if you're the Head Can in the Kerosene Crowd, and I'm sure you is, you'll have to buy a couple more Golf Grounds and a Padded Prayer Mat before me Boss hangs you on the line to dry."

With that I turned to Mister Rogers and sez:

"I come here for an answer; yes or no. Which is it?"

He looked hard into me lamps and sed, cold as a skating rink,

"The gentleman Outside will show you the way to the elevator."

So I chased meself, and wired to the Boss:

"Fishing is bad; the Bait is bum. The goat won't eat the Paper. Will be home in the morning.—HUMPTY."

The Boss said I did the job as good as any Man, and that he thought he would try a new Upper Cut which had just walked into his Thinking Gallery.

# AMALGAMATED GAS

## AMALGAMATED GAS

### "WORSE THAN THE SMELL OF VIOLETS IN A MARRIED MINISTER'S MOUSTACHE"

OUT six o'clock one day the Boss comes to me and sed: "Humpty, I want you to report for duty at nine to-night at me rooms in Young's hotel."

And I did.

When I got there he sez to me:

"I'm expecting a man here to-night who is a regular bad one. He is worse than the Smell of Violets in a Married Minister's Moustache. I want you to stay in the next room ready to run messages. If you should just Happen to leave the door open a little and stop

the crack with your eye and ear I don't think either of us will catch Creepy Croup from the draft."

Then he gives me a Dave Hill wink with his starboard lamp and sez:

"Oh yes, I also want you to make a noise like an Arrest Warrant whenever you hear me say anything about the pleasures of High Society in the Penitentiary. You see, Humpty, the gent is a dear old moth-eaten friend of mine and I want to make the evening as Lively as I can for him without pulling a Gun."

Now, then, wasn't that a fine Squad of Language to toss to a kid from a cab window? Well, I knew me bizness and was dead set to tumble to his, so I sez,

"Mister Lawson, there never was no Millionaire Cop in me family and youse will have to be a Belasco to me and tell

me how to make a Loudness like a warrant."

"Why," sed he, with a smile like a coon wears what has just met a watermelon going to its own wake, "all you got to do is rattle your Undershirt and breathe fierce till the place smells like a prison cell."

I remembered me Mother's Breath pay-day night and knowed there was sure-enough genius in the family for the stunt.

Pretty soon his Friend came hoppin' in, wearing a actor's overcoat what could make a Fuzzy Fur Store look worse than a Mexican Pup at a Collie Party.

"Hello, Addicks," sez me Boss. "You'se don't look as if the price of Senators had gone Up. Take that easy chair and light this cigar with some of

your Stage Money. It will remind me of old times and Tricks."

The guy Addicks was a smooth old geezer. He made me think of a Table d'hote Rat what had just pulled his face out of a pot of fifty-cent Butter to cool it off in five dollars' worth of Ice Cream. He had lamps like dark lanterns working overtime and was as Chesty as a man with a Permit to Spit in the Street Car. He rubbered around for a few puffs and then sed through the smoke,

"Well, Sir Thomas, why am I so honored this evening? You have handed me the Financial Peritonitis onct in due and ancient form, and I am not Cotton-Tongued Thirsty to butt into an Encore."

"You got no kick coming," sez Lawson. "Didn't I help you milk the Public Cow and hand Rogers the Poisoned

Amalgamated Gassers

"Addicks, light this cigar with some of your Stage Money."—Page 45

Coffee on that Bay State Gas Two-step? Didn't we have a full line of Frenzied Fun bucket-shopping the Massachusetts Legislature and putting our price mark on the High-browed Lawmakers in Delaware? I guess yes, and it's up to you to second the motion."

"Stop peddling chestnuts," chirped Addicks, "and come to the Center."

"Look here," sed the Boss, "do you want to cut in with me and give the Scrambled Oil Dyspeptics a new brand of Stomach Ache?

"Can't be done, eh? You're as wrong as a Wart on a leading lady's nose. And put this in your pipe, Addie dear; while it's happening we won't do a thing but Shake Down the shoestring speculators all over the country for a bundle of Mezuma as big as Rockyfeller's Self-respect.

"You wear a dagger in your belt and smoke cigarettes like a villain, and I will do the noble-hearted rescuer of the Down-trodden Stocking-full Investors.

"We will play Tumble-bug Tennis with Wall Street and keep the System's hands busy comforting their Green-apple Pain Parlor.

"Kansas is playing a Dead March under the Oil Gang's window and Terrible Teddy is giving a correct imitation of a hungry tomcat in a Virgin Rattery.

"It's our move.

"The times are as fit as Jimmy Britt when he sang dreamland to young Corbett."

Addicks sed something about not being able to trust the Boss and began to talk like a sea lion Barking for Breakfast Food.

That was me cue to Sell Papers, and

I fast-freighted a few swift bundles of me Warrant Stunt, but it didn't make a hit. After I had shook meself silly and breathed so heavy that I felt as winded as a church organ after mass, I took a tumble to meself and just listened.

Mister Addicks signed up for the season to do the Rubber Glove Work and the Boss then showed down on his plan, and sed:

"Addie, it's this way. I don't have to put you wise on Your part in the Con, because you're a G. A. R. when it comes to Panhandling, so here goes for mine. But first let me rattle the Bones on the past for a sip or two."

They was drinking French bubbles something fierce.

"Of course you've read Nobody's Magazine. Well, I had to have an Organ of my Own to grind to the Pub-

Me and the Boss "An Organ of my Own."—Page 50

lic, so I give the publishers the hailing sign of the Get-there Brotherhood and sung a bass lullaby about Increased Circulation. They were coy all right, till I drawd a copper-colored sketch of a Solid Gold Backstop to catch passed balls, returned copies and cancelled ad contracts. And, well, you know me, Addie. I haven't pressed me own pants for many years.

"I imported a crate of Superheated Words from Hot-air Land, and got a couple of war correspondents who were stuck on me Open-face Check Book to help me shuffle them. The first gust of Unnatural gas that I shot through the meter made the Public sit up all night.

"I was the realest thing since George Wash.

"I called names, made threats and crowded Limberger Cheese in the pock-

ets of the System's Sunday Coat with all the openness of a Dago Woman handing her baby Mother's Milk in a court room where the father is being tried for eating garlic.

"I have given them Preliminaries ever since.

"I have told how the enemy would look in the twelfth round, and served 'em everything but Solid Roast-beef Facts on a hot plate.

"The thing went bully till the February number, and no questions asked, but I fell down hard on that issue.

"The Big Winning I had made by coppering my own tips to the Public on Amalgamated made me over-confident and I missed a right swing for little old Wall Street's Groggy Jaw.

"I had to make good to the magazine for about 400,000 unsold copies,

and it learned me a lesson much and plenty.

"I got the public with me agin on the next issue by serving another round of Copper Cocktails and printing some fake Nursery Talk between me and Rogers.

"Next to the Real Thing—which I'll never give 'em, because I don't own one, and because it isn't necessary to me game—the People love to hear me tell what Rogers said when he tried to buy me honor, and how I said, looking a Straight Flush into his deep, sea-green lamps, 'Villain, take back your greasy pipe-line gold; I had rather a thousand times be a Gob of Bad Grammar in Faultless Boston than be your plaything in New York and fill Your Can with My Oil.'"

"What about your Remedy?"

"My Remedy? Why, Addie, you make me think your head is a Punk Forest.

"I never had one. Doctor Bunyan has had a corner on the remedy market ever since Holy Moses Played Marbles, and if I can only keep the Public's Ears unreefed half as long as he has held up his finger without changing hands I will be satisfied way down to the Grass Plot.

"Anticipation is the Opium of Joy; and it's up to me to encourage the Public Dope Pipe.

"I am for stringing the Dear Public till I have added a Fat Few to me bank roll and made Rogers and his pals understand what 'Getting Even' means when set to Little-german-band music by Yours Truly.

"It's the old game of throwing high moral dust in a man's eyes before you

divorce him from his stuff. People go dippy over a noisy reformed Money Drunkard and even trust him with their Tooth Brush when he tells how bad he was before his soul woke up and Stretched.

"We will just pound the market through the papers and magazine till we scare the people into Selling. Then we'll Buy, let the suckers get their second wind and boost the prices, then we'll Sell. It's easier than vending Beauty Powders to an Old Maid."

"On the level, Tommy, have you quit the Oil Crowd for good?"

"You mean me divorce from the Oil Bunch? Sure yes, I'm their green-grass widow all right. It was this way; after I beat you to them on the Gas Proposition we were as thick as prickly heat on a summer baby. Of course, Rogers

Held Out on me when the Amalgamated Copper Lambskins were divided, but I expected that. It was a case of dog eat dog, and he had the longest teeth.

" I gave him a moving picture talk of how it tasted to get the Short End of a thirty-five million dollar killing where I was the Particular Guy what had flammed the suckers into buying mines for $75,000,000 which only cost $40,-000,000. But the real cause of our Red Raging Split was their getting next to me ringing in a cold deck in the shape of Trinity Copper.

" They are a little too nice for me, with their Sunday School sucker-stretching blend. I'm for straight throat-scratching red liquor, and what's more, I've got to be Head Hog in the Pork Park, or I won't play root-the-hickory-nuts with any Herd. Ring-

round-the-rosey is rightity-right when I'm the rosey, but nixey-nit when otherwise."

"Yes," said the Boss, "I had some get-together talks with Rogers, but most of that stuff I printed is Home Brewed.

"He's a decent-enough old chap, but he won't let any other fellow wear the Gold Lace in his Squadron, and you have to use torpedo nets when sailing in his waters.

"He's the slickest thing in the business without drawing a card. I onct made him sore for two days by asking the loan of his heart to hone me razor on.

"Say, Addie, it's over forty statute miles from his heart to his pocket in a stock trade.

"Yes, he turned me down hard just

before I quit him, but I guess he's Sorry for it now."

The pie and ice cream I et for supper must have gone to me belfry to roost, because I went plum to sleep and was dreaming that I was a hen planning to rob a hawk roost when Lockstep Holmes put his skinny hand on me shoulder, and I woke up with a yell.

Mister Addicks jumped up, swallowed a bale of smoke, and when he quit coughing, sez:

"What in 'ell is that, Tom? Another of your Damnable Tricks?"

The Boss laughed fit to choke, and sez,

"Oh, no, Addie. That's me understudy. You know I was always long on private theatricals."

Then he phones me with his face to come in, and I made me bow to the pair of 'em.

Before the other guy could shoot any more questions the Boss sed:

"Humpty, get that three-legged stool over there, set down, and act as our Oracle and Fortune teller."

I onct coughed a quarter to a Coon Lady to tell me the bumps I had coming to me, and I was keen for the game, so I drawed me stool close, and set down between them.

"Now, Addie," sed the Boss, with a grin, "pitch a few Curved Ones at the kid. I will chip in with any explanations he needs and we'll get some real Four-cylinder Gasoline tips on the future. You know that out of the mouth of babes and sucklings comes wisdom in bunches. Look at him. He's fortune teller to the life, and even Smells the part. Humpty, when did your valet hand you the last shower bath?"

Now I won't stand for a josh from any Geezer, and remembering a Speil I heard at the theatre, I sed, turning me searchlights full on the Boss:

"Me Linen may not have lead the German at a Laundryfest lately, but it covers an Honest Heart. Can you say as much for Yerself, Sir Godfrey Travers?"

Before he had time to call a strike on me, I sez,

"And what's more, Mister Lawson, I may be a Suckling, but You can see a Sucker further than a cop can a booze store."

The Boss is a game loser and just laughed till the other guy bumped in with a fog-horn smile. Then he braced up quick and sed:

"Away with Mirth; let us to business. What question is eating you the most, Addie?"

Addicks smiled soft, just as if he was a priest annexing a subscription to the church, and asks me what was the Toughest Break Ever the Scrambled Oil Outfit had made.

The Boss explanationed a few and I worked me Think Tank hard for a minute, and sed:

"Letting University Jack's Baby Boy go out after dark without a nurse and send Crack-the-whip Telegrams to Washington."

Their wise tugs must have been towing bug barges agin the tide, because I had to draw a map that University Jack was John D. Rockyfeller, the Learning-mill Booster. It's big funny how some of them high-card players don't get wise to Real Language.

"On with the Dance," sez the Boss, "let joy be unconfined."

Addicks hits the Four-dollar Pop for another two gulps and, laughing all over the place, sez:

"Tommy, I think it's up to you to take the stool. I'm afraid I'll bat my next question way over the boy's bleachers."

"Never mind," sez the Boss, "I'll come back over the fence with the ball, if you do; so go ahead."

Sure enough, the Smooth Mike from Delaware put it way over me head, and the Boss had to stand for me.

"Seignor Tomaso," sed Addicks, "I think I know you about as well as Jonah did the Whale when he was using the big fish as a House-boat and doing all his business on Inside Information, but it drives me to the Puzzle Board to get next to why you went after the Life Insurance Companies so hard.

"They are the cleanest institutions in the pasture and do more for the civilization what don't fade or rip than any other infloonce in the world.

"Of course, my mug isn't in the Silk Plush Album of Saints, and if there's any Real Coin in soaking 'em, why you're to the good."

The Boss came back swift and sed:

"In the first place, they've been too Airtight about issuing me insurance I have asked for, and I think they are too Friendly Fannie with the big money boys on Wall Street.

"In the second place, they've got more money-power than most governments, and between us, Addie, I felt that if I put my footprints on their Peachy Pants I would not only be kicking my enemy's brother-in-law where it would do the most Good, but would also

arouse the Public to fever interest by sticking pins in their sacred white elephant early in the Game.

" Of course it wasn't a nice thing to do, but when a fellow is general manager of a Fourth of July bonfire he's got to keep the blaze high, even if he has to swipe the Hospital Gates to do it."

The Boss exercised his face a hull lot more about the insurance gazabos being too Chesty, but I didn't get wise to it much, because I couldn't help thinking about the time when Dutchy Swartz's old man died.

Chee! but them was tough times.

Dutchy's father was Aces Up. He never drove home in the jag wagon and was always Candy Kind to the old woman and the kids. The day he fell off the building where he was working

was the first job he had been able to cut his name on for two months. When he croaked a couple of weeks later there wasn't a sliver of grub in the house nor a cent to coax the butcher with. The coal box was holler and the landlord was as Icy Ike as a snowman.

It was nothing to eat, nothing to bury the old man with, and nowhere to go but in the street and get froze, when along come the Insurance Guy and tells the bunch that they had insurance money coming to 'em. He rubbered about for a little, monkeyed with some papers and then hands 'em Coin right out of his pants.

Hully Smoke! but you ought to seen the old woman's face. It was like sunshine rubbering through a busted snowstorm on Christmas Day.

She couldn't spiel a word. She just

cried soft and kissed the insurance guy's hands till his mug was as red as a automobile.

Dutchy did a fast lap to the grocery, and in a bug's wink there was grub, coal and everything in the house. I stood around like a dago cop at a dream christening, and me lamps leaked so hard that I didn't have to wash me face for two days.

After I had dried me sleeves and took a brace I sneaks up to the insurance guy and sez:

"I ain't just wise to your game, but I'd rather be Good Old You for a minute than be a hull flock of them Soft-drink Boys what's writ about in the Bible."

He hands me a laugh what come from the Right Place, and sez:

"This is what insurance companies

is for. We do this every day. It's our excuse for living."

When I asked him where all the coin comes from, he sez,

"Kid, the insurance companies has got enough money in their keeping to paste a strip of hundred dollar bills round the earth, and then some."

O yes, about the Boss. The next notice I took of his chatter he was telling Addicks that he had dropped a Stack of Blue Chips by faking up a lot of circular letters from insurance companies what wasn't meant for him particular, to prove that he had been asked to take insurance when he hadn't, and by printing the hull thing in the magazine along with a sample policy what a Hurry Harry Agent had give him to rubber at, and saying how it was the Real Thing when it wasn't.

Just then Addicks puts his dark lanterns on me and sez:

"Let's hear what the wise Humpty has to say about it."

I didn't call me tongue to breakfast right away, but after thinking a minute I asked if it wasn't mostly Women and Kids what got the insurance company's money, and when they sed yes I looked away from the Boss and sed, pretty slow on me pins:

" Good fighting dogs don't generally tackle Lady Dogs with Litters, no matter what the scrap's about."

We didn't none of us say nothing for awhile. Then the Boss sed I looked sleepy and better hike to me Hay Loft. But just as I was sleep-walking out of the room I heard the Addicks guy say:

" I guess your game is O. K., Tommy, but you'll have to make hay while the

Con shines. The people are getting next to you sixty miles an hour, and in a few months you'll be as dead as a Cured Boil on a Busy Boy's Neck.''

# THE LAMB DANCE

## THE LAMB DANCE

"THE RETURN TICKET OF A SHOT-OFF SKY ROCKET"

HE next morning the hull of our crowd was doing double quick stunts and everything was whizzing. I didn't see the Boss but onct, and he forgot to speak to me. There was plenty of telegrams, but the other fellows carried 'em. I heard the head Pen Pusher say that the Boss was selling short with both hands and the market would be good for a ten-point drop in a few days.

Oh my, Oh me, but we was Busy-izzy.

A few days after that I bought meself a paper when I was comin' down to the office, and, Gee, didn't the Boss have a big ad in it.

The letters was as big as Barnum's Circus and told the Public that the System had skinned 'em to a Bald Banana; that Amalgamated Geese had never had no Feathers, and that Frenzied Copper would put burning blisters on their hands if they held it a minute longer.

He advised 'em from his Weeping Soul to Sell everything they had what wasn't nailed down, and told 'em to keep their ears to the ground with the flaps pointing toward Him.

Mebbe the telephone girl wasn't the Swiss Bell-ringer Lady that day. I choose yes.

The Boss did the Lamb Dance over the ticker till two hours after eating

The Lamb Dance

"Doing double quick stunts."—Page 73

time. He shuffled a deck of telegrams with one hand and acted like a hospital doctor saying How-de-do to a tape worm with the other.

This lasted for a couple of days, but somebody must have put sand on the track. The Slump didn't come off, and the Boss was Crazy Claude for fair.

Some fresh guy left a drawed valentine in the front office what showed the Boss up as the return ticket of a shot-off sky rocket, with the words "Use Fakerine for that Fazed Feeling" under it. I was laughing with me full face when he come by and saw it. He didn't crack a grin, but just sed:

"The press of your important duties seems to make you hysterical, Humpty. You better go home and rest up for a few weeks. Don't chase back till we send for you."

Three days later I gets bumped by a Puff-wagon while crossing State Street, and I've been in this Bone-works ever since.

"Kind is he?" You bet he is, and I'm just aching to git back to me job.

Well, so-long, Micky; I've told you me story and you'll have to chase yourself now. I must try for me beauty sleep or the dandy Doc will keep me nailed down to this dinky cot till me whiskers grow. Give me love to the other Kids at the Western Onion.

Wow! Wow! but me bum leg is hurting me agin.

. . . . . .

The head nurse, gently brushing back his moist hair, put her hand on the messenger boy's forehead, and said to her subordinate:

"Poor little man; he seems delirious.

Don't let him talk so much to his friends. His wound heals far too slowly. There ought to be an iron-clad law against speeding automobiles in down-town streets."

Presently a comforting sleep spread its lulling coverlet over the tired little mind, but before his tossed and buffeted boatlet sailed softly forth on slumber's silent sea he drowsily whispered:

"This sportin' life is great. It takes a Messenger Kid to dig Living-Picture Potatoes out of the Wise Garden."

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